

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY for THE MENTAL SHIFT C.I.C.

## **Introduction**

THE MENTAL SHIFT C.I.C. is a company run for the following purpose:

*Provides support and educational services, for children and young people, using Muay Thai and general sport as the primary method.*

The Company Registered Address is:

- F1 The Cotton Mill Mather Lane  
Leigh  
WN7 2PW

Company Number: 14468287

The Company has adopted this safeguarding children policy and expects every adult working or helping at Company to support it and comply with it. Consequently, this policy shall apply to all staff, managers, trustees, directors, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of Company.

## **Purpose of the Policy**

This policy is intended to protect children who receive any service from us, including those who are the children of adults who may receive services from us. Under this policy, the term children shall mean any person who is under eighteen years of age.

The Company believes that no child or young person should experience abuse or harm and is committed to the protection of children and young people. This policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteers or staff, to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.

## **The Risks to Children**

Children can be vulnerable to different forms of abuse and harm. It is important to recognise that abuse and harm of children can cover a wide range of circumstances and behaviours. For example, children can be at risk of:

- physical or emotional abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- grooming and exploitation
- trafficking and modern slavery
- exposure to or infliction of domestic abuse
- bullying or cyber bullying
- exposure to other inappropriate content or behaviour, such as violence or criminal behaviour
- self-harm
- physical harm when engaging with activities without adequate supervision

The causal factors of any such harm and/or abuse can also be wide-ranging. For example, children can be placed at risk by family members or by members of the community.

### **Safeguarding Principles**

Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is an essential responsibility for our Company. We are committed to ensuring that any child who comes into contact with our services is properly safeguarded. Every person under this policy must ensure that they play an active role in ensuring that children are properly safeguarded.

Every person under this policy holds responsibility for:

- remaining alert and aware of possible safeguarding risks to children
- guarding children against harmful environments with appropriate actions (for example, adequate supervision or ensuring safe environments)
- taking positive steps to maintain the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with us as a Company
- reporting concerns expeditiously and appropriately, in line with child protection procedures
- understanding the duty to report specific concerns (and understanding how this interplays with confidentiality)
- challenging any inappropriate or harmful behaviour of any other adult and reporting this accordingly
- acting appropriately in the presence of children
- not taking any inappropriate risks
- not smoking, drinking or taking any form of illicit substances in the presence of children

### **Safeguarding Officer**

Any question, report or concern in relation to the safeguarding of children should be shared with our Safeguarding Officer:

- Name: KAI LEIGHTON
- Email: [saefguarding@thementalshift.org](mailto:saefguarding@thementalshift.org)
- Telephone: 07510600722

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All personal information we may process relating to children, shall be processed and stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy.

### **Responding to a Safeguarding Concern**

Where a child is at immediate risk of serious harm, any adult present should call 999. Thereafter, the Safeguarding Officer should be contacted as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Where there is a safeguarding concern but no immediate risk of serious harm, the adult who has heard or witnessed this concern should consult with the Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable and by no later than the end of that same day

Where any child makes a disclosure relating to harm or abuse to an adult, it is important for that adult to:

- listen calmly and carefully, showing that their views are taken seriously
- provide an appropriate and honest level of reassurance
- avoid interrogating children and asking probing, intrusive and/or leading questions
- avoid making false promises regarding secrets and confidentiality with the child (because any concern of abuse/harm must be shared with the Safeguarding Officer and any subsequent safeguarding referral)
- make a confidential written record of the discussion either during the discussion or immediately afterwards. The record should include the key details of the disclosure together with any relevant times, dates, places and people concerned. Audio and video recordings of children making disclosures should be avoided
- refer all relevant information to the Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable afterwards, and by no later than the end of the day

Upon receipt of any safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding Officer shall consult with any other relevant persons and will make any appropriate referrals to the relevant authorities, such as the applicable Local Authority Children's Services department.

### **Reporting Concerns About Other Adults**

Where any person has a concern regarding the conduct of an adult connected to the Company, which poses or may pose a safeguarding risk to children such as:

- harming a child either physically or emotionally  
exposing a child to behaviour which may cause physical or emotional harm
- engaging in criminal activity concerning a child

This must be raised in the first instance with the Safeguarding Officer (or where this is not appropriate, a different senior member of the organisation) so that the next appropriate steps may be agreed and actioned. We recognise that there could be circumstances where a person may need to report a matter that has taken place in a setting outside of the person's engagement with the Company.

Usually, any appropriate steps following a safeguarding referral in respect of an individual connected to the Company will include either:

- further initial enquiries
- escalation to the applicable Local Authority Children's Services department for assessment and/or the police for investigation
- instigation of any appropriate disciplinary, formal investigation processes and suspension of any person concerned within the Company
- a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or Access Northern Ireland, or any other relevant regulatory bodies

Any person within the Company who has allegations made against them shall be informed properly in a formal meeting of the particulars of the allegations and the relevant next steps which shall be taken. Such a meeting should ordinarily be held by the Safeguarding Officer. On certain occasions, such a meeting may not be convened until this has been approved by any authorities involved (such as the police or the relevant Local Authority)

Any person from within the Company who has allegations made against them shall be treated fairly. All enquires, investigations and decisions taken shall be just and fair, with the safety of any child concerned at the heart of the process.

Any person from within the Company who makes an allegation against another person from within the Company shall be listened to, taken seriously and shall be treated fairly and justly throughout the process of enquiries, investigations and decision making.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Access Northern Ireland, Disclosure Scotland Checks**

Checks under the appropriate legislation should be undertaken wherever required. The groups of people we will usually undertake checks with the DBS, Access Northern Ireland, and Disclosure Scotland (whichever is applicable) in relation to are:

*All those involved with children and young people, on behalf of The Mental Shift C.I.C. will be subject to DBS checks*

Wherever we deem it is necessary and appropriate to remove any individual from a position of work in an activity which is regulated under the relevant legislation, we shall also be obliged to make a referral to the DBS, Access Northern Ireland and Disclosure Scotland.

No individual who cannot present or be provided with an up-to-date DBS certificate will not be permitted to work with any child without being under supervision of an individual with DBS clearance.

### **Safeguarding Children at Events and Activities**

#### **Responsibilities and Planning**

Typically, we may arrange the following types of events and/or activities which could involve children:

*Mental Health programs, using Muay Thai as the primary method in providing support and education, based in gyms and schools across the UK.*

The Safeguarding Officer shall hold ultimate responsibility for the safety and appropriateness of the event. They may however appoint a delegate for some responsibilities the purpose of a specific event.

Although the Safeguarding Officer and any appointed delegates will hold ultimate responsibility for overseeing the safety for events and activities, all individuals under this policy must also play an active role in ensuring the safety of children at all times.

Appropriate background checking shall be undertaken for any adult engaged by us in connection with an event or activity involving children, wherever this is required by law (see the relevant section above).

For certain types of events or activities, we may issue an additional code of conduct, policy, or some specific other requirements which is specific to that occasion. Any such additional documentation will be made available to all those concerned (staff members, parents, guardians etc.) in advance. They should be read carefully and adhered to.

The location for any events or activities which are held by us shall be risk assessed properly in reference to the suitability and safety for children. Fire and safety procedures and precautions shall be made clear to all those involved.

## **First Aid**

Any accident or injury concerning a child should be brought to the attention of the nearest first aider and should thereafter be formally reported to the Safeguarding Officer.

## **Consent Forms**

We shall always obtain written consent from a parent or guardian for any event which takes place with children in attendance without their responsible parent or guardian present. Children between the ages of 16 to 18 can give their own consent so long as a senior member of staff from the Company feel they can do so, and are provided with adequate information regarding the activities they will take part in. Consent will be obtained via:

*In written format, made available when necessary.*

Consent forms will include emergency contact details and will set out any specific safety needs/requirements for children. All consent forms will be kept secure and shall be stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy.

## **Supervision**

For most activities and events, our procedure for supervision of children is as follows:

*For children and young people aged 12+, they will be supervised by at least 1 DBS cleared (and first aid trained) representative of The Mental Shift.*

Where we hold any events or activities whereby a child attends alongside their parent or guardian, parents and guardians should ensure that children are properly supervised.

## **Managing Behaviour of Children Generally**

Whenever any adult engaged by us is faced with challenging or inappropriate behaviour from a child or

Whenever any adult engaged by us is faced with challenging or inappropriate behaviour from a child or with conflict between children, they must:

- treat each child fairly and equally
- approach the situation in a calm and neutral manner
- only ever use physical restraint/intervention in order to protect the immediate safety of a person, for example to prevent an injury or harm either to the child or others
- wherever it is justified to physically restrain a child or to physically intervene, the amount of force used should be kept to the absolute minimum taking into account the risk posed
- make a written record of the incident and ensure this is reported appropriately to the Safeguarding Officer

## **Managing Risks Posed by Other Children**

It is important for all adults engaged by us to recognise that children can face harm from their peers. This can commonly take the form of bullying. Bullying can be defined as any behaviour which is:

- repeated; and

- has the intention of hurting somebody either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can sometimes be motivated by prejudices based on certain groups, for example gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. Bullying can often include:

- physical harm perpetrated against another child
- name calling and threats
- cyberbullying (threats and abusive comments made via technology)

Any instance of bullying or concern relating to possible bullying between children at any event or activities arranged by us will usually be dealt with by us in the first instance as follows:

*All young people and relevant staff will obtain facts of the situation and investigate the circumstances. Following this, if necessary, a warning and supportive measures will be enforced.*

Where any behaviour amounting to bullying continues following this, the following steps will be taken:

*If the young person is found to be continuing the inappropriate behaviour (such as bullying) they will be removed from the session, and a parent/carer will be informed immediately.*

All steps in relation to the prevention or management of bullying should be taken in consultation with the Safeguarding Officer.

### **Photography**

We operate a strict no photo policy. We will not take any photographs and ask that members of the public, parents or guardians and children do not take any photographs when attending our premises, activities and/or events.

This Policy is approved and robustly endorsed by THE MENTAL SHIFT C.I.C. and is due for review every 6 MONTHS.

Signed:     KAI LEIGHTON     (Safeguarding Officer)

Date:     22/12/2022